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**DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL  
ANNUAL SACRE REPORT – ACADEMIC YEAR 2018/19**

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**Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)**

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**Legal Requirement for Religious Education**

1. Every maintained school in England must provide a basic curriculum (RE, sex education and the National Curriculum). This includes provision for RE for all registered pupils at the school (including those in the sixth form), except for those withdrawn by their parents (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over) in accordance with Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.
2. Academies have to provide RE for all their pupils, except for those whose parents exercise the right of withdrawal, under the terms of their funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education.
3. Free Schools are academies in law and have the same requirement to provide RE.
4. The funding agreement for an academy without a religious designation states that it must arrange for RE to be given to all pupils in accordance with the requirements for a locally agreed syllabus, set out in section 375 (3) of the Education Act 1996 and paragraph (5) of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The requirements are that a syllabus must 'reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.
5. The key document in determining the teaching of RE is the locally agreed syllabus within the Local Authority (LA), although schools designated as having a religious character are free to make their own decisions in preparing their syllabuses

**Background to Schools/Academies in Darlington**

6. Darlington has only three Maintained primary schools, the remaining primary and secondary schools are either standalone Academies or Academies within a Multi Academy Trust.
7. An exercise carried out by this SACRE in February 2018 ascertained that there was a good proportion of the Borough's schools and academies using the Locally Agreed Syllabus and we were particularly interested to know the two religions that were being taught at secondary level as part of the GCSE examination.

8. The Chair acknowledged that the questionnaire had been a useful exercise in determining the use of the Locally Agreed Syllabus across the Borough and especially that it was being used by the academies.

### **The Duties of SACRE**

9. There is a legal requirement on all Local Authorities to establish a 'Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education' (SACRE). A SACRE's main duty is to advise the Local Authority on matters connected with the teaching of Religious Education and Collective Worship.
10. SACRE can advise the Authority to review its Agreed Syllabus and can recommend that particular teaching methods, materials and resources are considered for use in Religious Education.
11. A SACRE may also consider any application from Head Teachers that the requirement for Christian collective worship should not apply to a particular school or class of pupils within that school.

### **Membership of SACRE**

12. The membership of SACRE consists of four representative groups (or committees) and co-opted members. The membership below is the current Membership of SACRE.

#### **Representing Darlington Borough Council**

- Councillor Crudass (Cabinet Member with Children and Young People Portfolio).
- Councillor Bartch (Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee)
- Councillor Heslop (Labour Group Member)
- Councillor Curry (Liberal Democrat Group Member )

#### **Representing Church of England**

- Reverend P. Baker
- Martin Stand
- Beth Miller

#### **Representing Other Faith Groups**

- Christopher Reeves, Grange Road Baptist Church
- Morvyn Sanderson, Methodist Church
- Helen Ellis, Roman Catholic
- Bhopinder Singh, Sikhism
- Dr. M.A. Quader, Muslim Community/Islamic Society of Darlington
- Dr. N. Thakur, Hindu Community

- Kelsang Dragden, The Atisha Kadampa Buddhist Centre
- Mrs. M. Calderon, Religious Society of Friends
- Meg Thomson, United Reformed Church
- Bess Robertson, Darlington Hebrew Congregation

### **Representing Teaching Associations**

- Fiona Rankin, National Education Union (NUT and ATL)
- Nick Blackburn, National Association of Head Teachers
- Association of School and College Lecturers (current vacancy)
- Jenny Uzzell, National Association of School Teachers/Union of Women Teachers

### **Co-opted Members**

- Phil Andre
- Mike Fryer
- Stuart Rawle

### **Meetings of SACRE**

13. SACRE Members have met during the Academic Year 2018/19 on 12 November 2018, 19 March and 5 July.
14. The SACRE was guided and advised by Paul Richardson, Head of 11-19 Learning and Skills (up to July) and Anne Astbury, SENCO Partnership Link Officer from Children and Adults Services and supported by Allison Hill, Democratic Officer.

### **Chair and Vice Chair of SACRE**

15. At the meeting held on 13 March 2017, Jenny Uzzell, National Association of School Teacher/Union of Women Teachers was appointed as Chair and Martin Stand, Church of England was appointed Vice-Chair for a period of three years from the date of appointment.

### **Synopsis of Meeting Content and Events:**

#### **Commission on RE (CoRE) Report – Religious Education for All**

16. At our meeting on 12 November 2018 we discussed the final report published by the Commission on Religious Education (CoRE) in September 2018 entitled 'Religious Education for All'.
17. The final report proposed that a new National Plan for RE is enacted to ensure that learning in this area remains academically rigorous and knowledge rich.

18. We were advised that this was an independent report and there was no obligation currently for SACRE Members to respond to the report or to make any changes to their statutory obligations as a SACRE.
19. Members discussed the initial recommendations within the report alongside the range of issues that the CoRE were seeking to consult further on before drawing their conclusions.
20. We discussed in particular the recommendations to renew and expand the role of SACRE's; how the academisation of many schools within the borough has reduced the contact with SACRE and the ability for SACREs to support all schools in the area; the composition of SACREs; the statutory requirements of SACRE's; and how this SACRE can provide information and resources and provide advice to schools and RE leads on matters of religion and belief in schools.

### **Appointment to Vacant Positions**

21. Following any resignations from our SACRE Members we continue to appoint to any vacancies as soon as possible to ensure that our attendance at meetings is maximised.

### **Durham Big Spring Clean 2019**

22. At our meeting in March 2019 SACRE Members discussed the Durham and Darlington Big Spring Clean which was being held between 9 February and 9 April.
23. This event gives communities the opportunity to work in partnership with Darlington Borough Council to help improve and make a difference to where they live and previous Big Spring Clean campaigns had been successful with thousands of bags of litter being collected by hundreds of local volunteers.
24. The Chair of Litter Free Durham attended the meeting and confirmed that if communities do a litter pick they were advised to notify the Borough Council as they were keen to monitoring the help that was being received.
25. SACRE Members were encouraged to help support the campaign and were provided with relevant contacts.

### **Holocaust Ceremony 2019**

26. At the March meeting we were provided with an update on the 2019 Holocaust Ceremony which was held at the Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College. The theme of the 2019 Service was 'Torn from Home' and had been hosted by Celebrating Communities.
27. All schools and colleges had been notified of the Ceremony and the Ceremony had been well supported with over 120 attendees. During the service candles

had been lit to commemorate other genocides and atrocities that had occurred since the end of the Second World War.

### **Ofsted Inspection Framework Consultation**

28. The Head of 16-19 Learning and Skills gave a verbal update to advise Members of the Ofsted Inspection Framework Consultation and that the consultation had been encouraging in relation to value added and the broader curriculum and suggested that Members of this SACRE may want to consider monitoring the new inspection reports at a future date to identify specific feedback on RE.
29. Phil Andre, Co-opted Member advised SACRE that he had recently attended a conference in Northumberland for RE teachers and Mark Evans, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) responsible for religious education insisted that inspection teams would also be looking at the delivery of RE and insuring that statutory requirements are being met in schools.
30. He also advised that a questionnaire had been circulated to schools in Northumberland to collate data on religious education being delivered within their schools and it was agreed that the results of this survey be circulated to our SACRE Members at a future date.

### **National Recommendations on SACRE funding**

31. At our meeting in July 2019 we considered the results of a recent survey on how the Central Services School Block (CSSB) was being used by Local Authorities on SACRE business and that many SACRE's are allocated far less than 1 per cent.
32. The Lead Officer advised SACRE Members that the national recommendation is that a Local Authority should allocate at least two per cent of the CSSB to SACRE in order that SACRE can carry out its statutory duties and that Darlington's CCSB allocation was £1,454.00. It was also reported that there was no a dedicated SACRE budget and any spending on SACRE was absorbed within the main Council budget.

### **Religious Education and Collective Worship Survey in Schools**

33. At the July meeting we also discussed a Religious Education and Collective Worship survey which had been undertaken by Northumberland County Council and distributed to all RE teachers within their schools.
34. We noted that a survey had also been undertaken by Newcastle City Council and Members considered the questions that were contained within that survey to RE teachers and agreed that a similar exercise could be carried out in this authorities schools and to share its summary results with Newcastle and Northumberland SACRE's.
35. We also discussed the possibility of a joint report with Newcastle and Northumberland SACRE's.

36. The survey was circulated to RE teachers within our schools on 4 September 2019.

### **Visits to Schools /Information Sharing**

37. SACRE continue to receive requests via SACRE from our religious organisations to ascertain if they would be willing to host visits from school children at our Schools and the Democratic Officer makes every effort to co-ordinate these visits and forward contact details.
38. The Democratic Officer had also contacted all RE Leads within our schools with the offer of sharing resources and knowledge across all schools and to circulate any information or events among RE Leads to strengthen the role of this SACRE.

### **Special Thanks**

39. In presenting this report Darlington Borough Council, local School Teachers and Members of Faith Groups be warmly thanked for their collective and individual contributions.

### **Members of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**